

Section 3:

Assessment

for Health

Education

Assessment for Health Education

Innovations in assessment represent powerful tools for aligning curriculum and instruction. States are using new assessment strategies as vehicles to drive and improve education and monitor program effectiveness. Meaningful educational assessment can encourage classroom instruction that stimulates higher-order thinking and practical application of knowledge and skills.

States are collaborating in the development of needed assessments, because developing and validating assessment instruments is costly. The State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) is one such major collaborative effort. In 1993, CCSO-SCASS initiated the Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP). Specialists in assessment and health education from 32 SCASS member states collaborated to produce assessments and other resources.

The mission of the CCSO-SCASS HEAP is to develop materials and resources to foster meaningful assessment of student knowledge and skills within a coordinated school health program. The main goal is to produce and distribute valid and reliable assessment instruments for statewide, local, and classroom use. Vermont has been a member of this project since 1997.

What Does Performance Assessment Mean for Health Education?

Nationally, educators are setting goals for students to be able to think critically, solve complex problems, and communicate effectively. Physical, mental, and emotional health are critical components of a student's ability to meet these goals.

Performance assessment offers educators a way to measure students' knowledge and skills related to instruction in the classroom. Innovations in assessment move beyond standardized multiple-choice testing to performance-based evaluations. In the field of health education, performance assessment shifts the emphasis from knowing health *facts* to developing health *skills*, thus providing a more complete and authentic picture of student achievement.

How does performance assessment improve teaching and learning? Teachers are using new assessment strategies as vehicles to drive and improve education and monitor program effectiveness. Meaningful health education assessment can encourage classroom instruction that stimulates higher-order thinking and practical application of knowledge and skills. Its major purpose is to guide improvements in health education planning and delivery. Its final goal is to improve the lives of Vermont children.

Performance Assessment: Moving Beyond Multiple Choice

Performance assessment refers to testing methods that require students to develop answers, products, or performances that demonstrate their proficiency in specific content and skills. Performance assessment relates to students' actual experience and strives to involve students in meaningful ways in their context and environment. Performance assessment in health education provides educators the opportunity to view student growth in a rich and dynamic way. These assessments may take many different forms, including writing an essay, making an oral or visual presentation, or assembling a collection of representative work, such as a portfolio.

Criteria for Good Performance Assessment

Performance assessment can and should be integrated into the learning experience, rather than being “extra” or “isolated” tasks for the teacher or the students. The assessment presents the context of the situation, the problem or problems to be solved, and criteria by which the students will be evaluated. Student work is scored using specific scoring criteria.

Good performance assessment meets the following criteria:

- matches standards and outcomes
- requires evaluation and synthesis of knowledge and skills
- emphasizes higher-order thinking skills
- clearly indicates what the student is asked to do, but not how to do it
- is at an appropriate reading level
- has criteria that are clear to students and teachers
- is engaging and relevant to students
- links to ongoing instruction
- provides feedback to students
- reflects real-world situations
- emphasizes use of available skills and knowledge in relevant problem contexts

Guide to Assessment Terms

Item Pool or Item Resource Bank

A term used to describe the collection of assessment items developed in the HEAP. Four types of items have been developed for the HEAP: selected response and three performance-based items: constructed response (short answer), performance events, and performance tasks.

SR Selected response

Commonly called multiple choice (MC). These items can be scored by machines.

EXAMPLE

Grade Level: Middle School Content Area: Tobacco

Which of the following is NOT a good example of a refusal skill if someone offers you tobacco?

- A. Say “no” and walk away
- B. Start an argument
- C. Say “no” and change the subject
- D. Keep repeating that you’re not interested

SCR Short Constructed Response

Also known as short answer (SA) response. The assessment question posed requires the student to write a short answer. Constructed-response items are performance-based assessments.

EXAMPLE

Grade Level: High School Content Area: Nutrition


Plan a healthful picnic lunch menu for a hot, sunny day. Describe how you will pack the foods for your picnic and explain why you have chosen these packing methods.

ECR Extended Constructed Response

The assessment question posed requires a longer response. Also written as an acronym ER, Extended Response, these are performance-based assessments.

EXAMPLE

Grade Level: High School Content Area: Nutrition




Family and consumer science students have been asked to create posters about food safety that can be posted in their classrooms. Create a poster that lists five rules that should be followed when food is prepared and served. For each rule, explain why it is important to follow the rule. Be sure to make your poster persuasive.

Performance Events

Performance events are curriculum-embedded activities that students complete within a single class period. These are performance-based assessments.

EXAMPLE

Grade Level: High School Content Area: Nutrition




Students are given several different food labels. They analyze the labels and present their findings to the class, recommending which food is the more healthful choice.

Performance Tasks

Performance tasks are curriculum-embedded projects that students complete outside of class over an extended period of time. These are performance-based assessments.

EXAMPLE

Grade Level: High School Content Area: Nutrition



Students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of the types of nutrition resources that are available to low-income families in their community. They do so by researching a number of resources, conducting interviews, compiling their information, and presenting that information in a written report.

Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection or showcase of examples of a person's best work in a particular field. The assessment portfolio is the students' opportunity to show what they consider their best efforts at achieving specific standards of health literacy. The items in a portfolio are generally performance-based.

Scoring Rubrics

The Scoring Rubrics are a set of guidelines for scoring performance-based student work. The HEAP has developed a holistic scoring system that applies to all of the performance-based assessment items developed for the project. HEAP uses a four-point scale. The HEAP rubrics were adapted and additional rubrics were developed to assess Vermont health education standards.

Exemplars and Anchors

Exemplars are previously scored examples of student work used in training to illustrate the score points. Many different exemplars illustrate the various types of responses that many students can produce in responding to a stimulus for each of the score points.

A scored student response that is used to establish the score points for the scoring rubric is an anchor paper. Anchor papers are the student response papers chosen to represent each level of performance described in the scoring rubric. They literally anchor the scoring rubrics and are essential to establish and maintain the validity and reliability of the scoring system.

Rubrics and Scoring

Students should have a clear understanding of the standards for performance assessment. These standards will relate both to concepts, knowledge of health facts, and the skills for health literacy.

The CCSSO-SCASS HEAP developed specific rubrics for scoring concepts and skills. These rubrics have been modified to align with Vermont Standards and new rubrics were developed. The rubrics are found on the following pages.

Students can perform better if they know what is expected of them. Teachers have found great success when students understand rubrics and the criteria for scoring. Student rubric posters were developed for classroom use.

Overview of Vermont Rubrics

Core Concepts
VT Standards
3.4, 3.5, 7.14



**Interpersonal Communication/
Refusal Skills**
VT Standards 1.15, 3.5



Advocacy
VT Standards 1.15, 5.15



Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution
VT Standard 3.12



Respect
VT Standard 3.3



Accessing Information
VT Standard 3.5



Healthy Choices/Self Management
VT Standard 3.5



Goal Setting
VT Standard 3.5



Decision Making
VT Standard 3.7



Media Literacy
VT Standard 5.14

